

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1-118. (canceled)

119. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid having at least 80% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345)~~;

(d) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345)~~, lacking its associated signal peptide;

(e) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344);

(f)(d) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344); or

(g)(e) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209976;

wherein, the polypeptide encoded by said nucleic acid induces chondrocyte proliferation.

120. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid of Claim 119 having at least 85% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345)~~;

~~(d)~~ a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide;

~~(e)~~ the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344);

~~(f)(d)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344); or

~~(g)(e)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209976;

wherein, the polypeptide encoded by said nucleic acid induces chondrocyte proliferation.

121. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid of Claim 119 having at least 90% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide;

~~(c)~~ a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);

~~(d)~~ a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide;

~~(e)~~ the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344);

~~(f)(d)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344); or

~~(g)(e)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209976;

wherein, the polypeptide encoded by said nucleic acid induces chondrocyte proliferation.

122. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid of Claim 119 having at least 95% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 ~~shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);~~

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 ~~shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345),~~ lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);~~

(d) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345),~~ lacking its associated signal peptide;

(e) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 ~~shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344);~~

~~(f)(d)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 ~~shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344);~~ or

~~(g)(e)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209976;

wherein, the polypeptide encoded by said nucleic acid induces chondrocyte proliferation.

123. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid of Claim 119 having at least 99% nucleic acid sequence identity to:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 ~~shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);~~

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 ~~shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345),~~ lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);~~

(d) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345),~~ lacking its associated signal peptide;

(e) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 ~~shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344);~~

~~(f)(d)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344); or

~~(g)(e)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209976;

wherein, the polypeptide encoded by said nucleic acid induces chondrocyte proliferation.

124. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);~~

(d) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

(e) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344);

~~(f)(d)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344); or

~~(g)(e)~~ the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209976;

wherein, the polypeptide encoded by said nucleic acid induces chondrocyte proliferation.

125. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 124 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345).

126. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 124 comprising a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide.

127-128. (canceled)

129. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 124 comprising the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344).

130. (currently amended) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 124 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344).

131. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 124 comprising the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209976.

132. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid that hybridizes under stringent conditions to:

(a) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO: 345);

(b) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO: 345), lacking its associated signal peptide;

(c) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 345 shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345);

(d) ~~a nucleic acid sequence encoding the extracellular domain of the polypeptide shown in Figure 240 (SEQ ID NO:345), lacking its associated signal peptide;~~

(e) the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344);

~~(f)~~(e) the full-length coding sequence of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 344 shown in Figure 239 (SEQ ID NO:344); or

~~(g)~~(f) the full-length coding sequence of the cDNA deposited under ATCC accession number 209976;

wherein said stringent conditions employ hybridization using 50% formamide, 5X SSC, 50 mM sodium phosphate (pH 6.8), 0.1% sodium pyrophosphate, 5X Denhardt's solution, sonicated salmon sperm DNA (50 µg/ml), 0.1% SDS, and 10% dextran sulfate at 42°C, and

washes at 42°C in 0.2X SSC, at 55°C in 50% formamide followed by a high-stringency wash at 55°C in 0.1X SSC, EDTA.

133. (canceled)

134. (previously presented) The isolated nucleic acid of Claim 132 which is at least 10 nucleotides in length.

135. (currently amended) A vector comprising the nucleic acid of Claim 124 ~~119~~.

136. (previously presented) The vector of Claim 135, wherein said nucleic acid is operably linked to control sequences recognized by a host cell transformed with the vector.

137. (previously presented) A host cell comprising the vector of Claim 135.

138. (previously presented) The host cell of Claim 137, wherein said cell is a CHO cell, an *E. coli* or a yeast cell.